

Walker Declares Watershed Success

Thousands hear watershed message--improve watersheds

By Jack Wilbur
Editor, Utah Watershed Review

Wonderful watershed work has been taking place in Utah watersheds for many years. But the past 12 months have been special because Utah Governor Olene S. Walker has lent her name to the cause of promoting, protecting and enhancing precious water resources statewide.

Utah's Governor's Watershed Initiative is one of several initiatives Walker has embraced in her 14-month term as Governor. Walker took over for Governor Michael O. Leavitt on Nov. 5, 2003, after Leavitt took a position in the Bush Administration as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Shortly after becoming Utah's 15th Governor, Walker called on three of her cabinet members to develop and implement a Walker Work Plan initiative focusing on an important environmental concern. They chose water and watershed health. Governor Walker wanted the Governor's Watershed Initiative to improve water quality, increase water yield and improve habitat for wildlife.

Cary G. Peterson, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), Dianne Nielson, Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ), Bob Morgan, Utah Department of Natural Resources (UDNR), and staff members from each agency created a plan that would:

- Enhance at least 25 priority watersheds statewide,
- Encourage community involvement in watershed improvement efforts by at least doubling the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody sites,
- Reach all 4th grade and 9th grade public school students with the Governor's watershed message in a way that meets the Utah State Office of Education's Core Curriculum Standards, and
- Increase watershed awareness and education among youth and adults throughout Utah by asking five watershed questions:

"Watershed Initiative" continued on page 4



One of the 200 or so 4th grade students from three Box Elder County schools plants a riparian plant along the Bear River in April, 2004.

Chalk Creek Project Improves Water Quality

A decade long watershed improvement project has resulted in a 10 to 20 percent decrease in the amount of phosphorus getting into Chalk Creek, above Coalville in Summit County.

"It's remarkable that 10-20 percent of the phosphorus loadings have been removed," said Walt Baker, acting director, Utah Division of Water Quality. "That may not seem like a lot, but nationally that is very significant."

The phosphorus reduction is also significant because Chalk Creek has been identified by Governor Walker as one of 25 priority watersheds in Utah designated for improvement as part of the Governor's Watershed Initiative. In the early 1990s, before the project began, Chalk Creek was listed by the state as the third most polluted water body in Utah.

"We want to do away with the bare dirt and we want vegetative cover on the stream banks," said Cary G. Peterson, Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. "That's good for the people who drink water



Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson, touts water quality efforts at an August news conference as part of a volunteer stream restoration project along South Fork.

"Chalk Creek" continued on Page 2

Walker Thanks Initiative Volunteers

By Jack Wilbur and Larry Lewis
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Surrounded by holiday decorations in the elegant setting of the Governor's Mansion in early December, outgoing Utah Governor Olene S. Walker thanked volunteers and staff who participated in the Governor's Watershed Initiative during the past year.

Walker thanked more than 100 community volunteers who waded through water, planted trees and removed debris from stream banks in an effort to improve the state's water quality.

The Governor's Watershed Initiative targeted 25 key streams for improvement. One of those streams was Summit County's Chalk Creek, located near Coalville. Recent Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) studies of the creek recorded a 20 per cent reduction in phosphorus...and nutrient

"Reception" continued on page 4

No Ken Jennings, But Watershed Jeopardy Still a Hit in Utah

There are no \$2 million winners, no television audience and no expensive sets, but Watershed Jeopardy, the Governor's Watershed Initiative's version of the popular TV game show, is still a big hit among Utah students and adults.

Ann Evan, aquatic education director, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, developed the game for the Governor's Watershed Initiative by adapting the Water Jeopardy game she played with students for years when she worked for the Division of Water Resources.

"This new game tries to incorporate the water quality and wildlife habitat aspects of watersheds while still including information about water resources and conservation," Evans said.

Unlike the fancy electronic version used in the television show, Watershed Jeopardy uses a manual game board made from foam core, Velcro and laminated paper cut into squares.

- There are five categories:
- Watershed Basics
 - Factors Affecting Watersheds
 - Helping Our Watersheds
 - Improving Watershed Health
 - Watershed Trivia

Each category has five questions, each having a progressively higher points value from 100 - 500 points. The greater the value the harder the question. For example, many of the readers

of this publication should know the question to this answer, worth 200 points in Watershed Basics: It is "a thin layer of the earth's crust, made up of mineral and organic particles of all sizes." Of course, the question is what is soil?

You folks are smart. Try the 500 point question in the Factors Affecting Watersheds category. The answer is: "The type of weather a region has over a long period of time." If you asked what is climate? you'd be right. Congratulations.

For more information about the game, contact Ann Evans, (801) 538-4769.



Ann Evans, aquatic education specialist, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, spent many week days and Saturdays in 2004 "playing" Watershed Jeopardy with children and adults.

Chalk Creek

Continued from front

down in Davis and Weber counties.

"It's always better to keep the water clean at the source than to have to spend all the money and effort at the treatment plant to make it clean enough to drink," said Shane Green, state range conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

More than \$3.5 million has been spent on the Chalk Creek Watershed project. About half of the money has come from federal and state agencies, the other half has come from local land owners and Coalville City, Baker said.

"From Coalville up to the top of the watershed each private landowner has put money and improvement efforts into this project," Peterson added. "The land and the response of the vegetation are the good indicators that things are going well."

And the water quality data released by

the Utah Division of Water Quality supports the idea that things are going well in Chalk Creek.

Chalk Creek is a mostly agricultural watershed. Since the project began in the early 1990s, more than 85,000 acres of land have been treated and 90 land owners have participated in watershed restoration efforts.

Some of the types of projects accomplished in the watershed include stream bank restoration, fencing, grazing management, a new canyon-wide sprinkler irrigation system that reduces erosion, and streamside planting of willows and other vegetation.

Chalk Creek is a tributary to the Weber River that joins the larger river just above Echo Reservoir. Chalk Creek is already seeing an improvement in Bonneville cutthroat trout population. Downstream recreation and water use improvements are starting to show up as well.

Chalk Creek water is designated for use as drinking water, cold water fishery, recreation, and irrigation.

Volunteers Contribute to Chalk Creek Success

Throughout the 12 years or so of the Chalk Creek water quality improvement project, volunteers have helped do some of the work from time to time to help save money and speed up the process.

The most recent volunteer effort took place in August 2004 on Colby Pace's ranch on South Fork of Chalk Creek.

About 20 volunteers from the FFA organization club at North Summit High and three youth volunteer coordinators from the Utah Federation for Youth, in Salt Lake City, joined forces with local soil conservation district and Natural Resources Conservation Service employees to take on an ambitious stream stabilization project.

Conifer trees were cut and staked horizontally into the stream bank. Willow cuttings were then planted into the conifer revetment. The idea is that next year the willows will take root and start to grow through the revetment. The conifers will provide stability during high water and keep the willows and additional stream bank from washing away.

Willows were a large part of the volunteer project. A water stinger was brought in from Logan to help volunteers plant willow cuttings along the bank and throughout the riparian area. The stinger is essentially a high pressure water sprayer with a highly concentrated nozzle tip that is powered by a gasoline generator. The water cuts through the soil and moistens the ground at the same time, allowing the willow to be planted and watered in one action.

Finally, willows were used in one highly eroded bend in the creek in a different way. A "mattress" of willows were bundled together and staked horizontally against the bank. The concept and outcome is very similar to using conifers.

Volunteers were joined and thanked by Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson, Walt Baker, acting director, Utah Division of Water Quality, George Hopkin, acting director, marketing and conservation division, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, and local soil conservation district board members.



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<http://ag.utah.gov/mktcons/uwr.html>

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Watershed News Briefs

Three Utah Watershed Awarded USDA Conservation Security Money

Three Utah watersheds were among 202 across the nation included in a historic new program designed to reward farmers for long-term stewardship. Outgoing U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced the selected watersheds in November and said that sign-ups for the 2005 Conservation Security Program (CSP) would begin this winter.

The three primary watersheds announced for Utah are the Little Bear in Cache County, the San Pitch in Sanpete County, and the Montezuma in San Juan County.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports a tradition of ongoing stewardship of working agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. It is part of the 2002 Farm Bill and was introduced last summer in 18 watersheds nationwide. In this first opportunity for farmers from each state to participate, about one eighth of the Nation's eligible farmers will be given the chance to apply each year over an eight-year period.

Conservation Partnership Grant to Fund the Deep Creek Project

Outgoing Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman awarded a \$150,533 Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) grant to the Great Salt Lake Resource Conservation and Development Council to plan for habitat improvements that benefit sensitive wildlife species in the Deep Creek Watershed on the Utah-Nevada border below Wendover. "This award supports the development of locally led solutions to pressing natural resource problems and helps farmers and ranchers cooperate and share information to address environmental challenges," Veneman said.

The Deep Creek Watershed provides a unique opportunity to implement coordinated resource management. The watershed boundary spans two states, the Goshute Indian Reservation and four counties.

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Storm water and other urban nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution issues, quality growth, and open space conservation will be among the highlight topics of the 2005 Utah NPS Water Quality Conference in Salt Lake City, September 27-29, 2005.

Utah Animal Feeding Operation Publication and Video Now Available

Utah's Animal Feeding Operation Strategy implementation team has produced a new publication and video/DVD about the manure management strategy and implementation process to this point.

The publication--Utah Animal Feeding Operations: Five Years of Progress--1999-2004, and the video/DVD counterpart--Managing Manure: Utah Animal Feeding Operation Strategy--1999-2004, were released in early autumn 2004.

Both the publication and the video recap the development of the Utah strategy, the assessment phase and the implementation to this point. They also feature a few short case study examples of some of the work being done on farms and ranches.

For a copy, contact: jackwilbur@utah.gov.



Page Loses Battle with Cancer

UDAF, natural resources community lose good friend, one of their own

Koy Page, 64, program administrator for the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food's (UDAF) loan programs, passed away at his home in Oakley, Utah, November 13, 2004, following a long battle with cancer.

"Koy was a dedicated worker, who helped Utah's farmers and ranchers improve their businesses, while conserving and improving our state's natural resources," said Cary G. Peterson, commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. "Koy will be sincerely missed by the employees of this department and the larger agricultural community of the State of Utah."

Though he officially left his work in spring 2004, Page made two public appearances at agriculture functions in his final months. He attended some of the National Association of Rural Rehabilitation Corporations Conference in late September in Salt Lake City, a conference he was

instrumental in bringing to Utah. His final appearance was in early November at the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UADCD) Annual Convention in Provo, where he received a prestigious Graham S. Quate award with his wife Phyllis and several members of his family.

"Page came to the UDAF with a solid background in banking business lending," said George Hopkin, acting director, Marketing and Conservation division, UDAF. "He put those skills to use here making several million dollars worth of loans each year."



Koy Page surrounded by family on Nov. 4, 2004, as he received the Graham S. Quate award from Commissioner Peterson at the UACD convention in Provo.

“Reception” continued

that causes excess aquatic plant growth and is harmful to fish.

"I am tremendously impressed with the commitment that our volunteers have shown this year, thank you," she said. "You have taken the message to the people that watersheds are vital to our environment because 'every acre is a watershed.' And I hope next year we can report even greater results," she added.

"I would like to thank Senator Bob Bennett for his support of the Governor's Watershed Initiative and his efforts to secure \$200,000 of federal funds for future watershed projects. Those funds are to be used by the Utah Watershed Coordinating Council and local watershed groups throughout the state," Walker continued. "Now I guess I'll have to get busy as I prepare my budget," she added, eluding to the possibility that the State of Utah may try to match a portion of the federal funds.

Walker urged volunteers and agencies to continue the "great work" into the future. However, she stopped short of saying whether the incoming administration plans to continue the work as an official Governor's Initiative, though she had an "indication" from then candidate Huntsman that he wanted to continue the Initiative.

Governor Walker also congratulated and thanked three state department leaders whose programs contributed to the program's success: DNR Executive Director, Bob Morgan; DEQ Executive Director, Dianne Nielson; and UDAF Commissioner, Cary G. Peterson.

Volunteers received certificates of appreciation from the governor and posed for pictures with her during a one-hour ceremony.

Representatives from volunteer groups in and around Salt Lake City were joined by volunteers from Provo and Orem in Utah County, Vernal, Farmington, Park City and Coalville in Summit County, and the Cache Valley.

Two local news organizations from Summit County, KPCW radio and the Summit County Bee newspaper, also made the short trip to report on the efforts of their residents.

“Watershed Initiative” continued

- What is a watershed?
- Where is my watershed?
- How healthy is my watershed?
- Where does the water go?
- What can I do?

On November 24, 2004, Governor Walker officially kicked off the Initiative at Memorial House in Memory Grove in Salt Lake City with a news conference and mini water fair for 4th grade students from nearby Jackson Elementary School.

Great Results After One Year

By November 2004 all of the Governor's Watershed Initiative goals had been met or exceeded.

Community Involvement

During that 12 month period, 67 new adoption locations have been added to the Adopt-A-Waterbody program. One or more groups at each site have worked to improve lakes and streams throughout Utah by organizing stewardship projects including trash cleanup, planting vegetation, removing invasive plant species, stabilizing stream banks and monitoring water quality. A new Adopt-A-Waterbody web site, <http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov>, that was developed for the Initiative, features an online adoption application that makes it easier than ever for groups to participate. Each of the adopting groups received a certificate signed by the Governor in appreciation of their efforts.

Large scale and small scale projects took place throughout the spring, summer and autumn. Lieutenant Governor Gayle McKeachnie help remove noxious weeds and planted native trees with volunteers from the St. George area along the Virgin River in April 2004. He also toured several project locations in Eastern Utah and Northern Utah in August, planting several trees along the way.

Agency head Peterson, Nielson and Morgan all participated in planting events in mid-April as part of the kickoff of Take Pride

in Utah Month. Several other local, state and federal agency leaders took part in Adopt-A-Waterbody activities throughout the year.

Take Pride in Utah won a national Take Pride in America award as the outstanding state program in 2004. Utah's long-standing commitment to annual Take Pride in Utah community projects, along with the program's connection to the Governor's Watershed Initiative and strong promotion of watershed Take Pride projects this year were the main reasons for the national recognition.

Classroom Education

New water education resource books have been developed and distributed to all 4th and 9th grade classrooms. The "Search for the Water Cycle" book, completed just prior to the kickoff, has been distributed to 4th grade teachers throughout the state. The book includes several lesson plans and interactive activities that teach students about the water cycle, water movement through watersheds and other important watershed concepts. "Streamside Science" is the new 9th grade watershed education resource book for Earth Science teachers develop by Utah State University Water Quality Extension. Streamside Science has lesson plans and interactive activities that focus on water quality and habitat issues, was completed by the summer of 2004 and distributed to 9th grade Earth Sciences teachers throughout Utah for use during the 2004-2005 school year.

Community Outreach and Education

Beyond the resource guides for teachers to use as part of their class core curriculum lesson plans, an estimated 6,000 students have received watershed education in the classroom by resource professionals from state and local agencies including the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Division of Water Resources, Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah State University Extension, and many of Utah's 38 soil conservation districts. Additionally an estimated 23,000 people received watershed information through water fairs, expositions, festivals, scouting and other community events.

Governor walker joined 4th grade students from Backman Elementary School in Salt Lake City at the Jordan River behind the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food building in March to celebrate National Agriculture Week and learn about watersheds and water quality. The governor even demonstrated how runoff from rain and snow can pollute rivers and lakes.

Governor Walker also participated in the Weber Water Fair in April, in which 1,700 4th grade students from Weber and Ogden schools districts learned about a variety of water issues.

Watershed Initiative Coordinating Committee members also participated in several water fairs and other community events including the Centerville Water Fair in January, in which about 100 students 4th – 6th grade learned about various aspects of water and watersheds; the Park City Water Fair in April that included about 300 students from four area schools; the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival in Davis County in May, which attracted 1,000 people; and the Bear River Festival in Logan in late May, which included interactive exhibits, live music and dancing for about 1,000 area residents.